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Johnny's New Suit

A Comedy in Two Acts

By
MARY G. BALCH



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BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1917

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Johnny's New Suit

CHARACTERS

MRS. SILAS LARKIN, *mother of a growing boy.*

JOHN LARKIN, *the boy.*

MRS. ALBERT SPENCER, *a neighbor.*

MISS MIRANDA BROWN, *president of Choral and Rhetorical Society.*

ARETHUSA PETTINGELL } *young people who compete for the*
MATILDA B. GREEN } *"prize."*

DEACON RICE, *judge.*

NOTE

The parts of Arethusa Pettingell, Matilda Green and John Larkin should be taken by adults dressed as children. John's part may be effectively taken by a woman.



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SEP 18 1917

no 1-

Johnny's New Suit

ACT I

SCENE.—MRS. LARKIN'S sitting-room. *Simple, old-fashioned, well-worn furniture. Door at back. Table and chairs littered with sewing implements, cloth, patterns, etc.*

(As curtain rises, MRS. SILAS LARKIN is seen seated near table cutting out sleeves on lap-board. She studies the sleeves with great concern for a few moments.)

MRS. L. Well, I bet I've made a blunder now. Where's that pattern? *(Puts down lap-board hastily, drops scissors as she rises to search for pattern. Reads from pattern.)* "Sleeves—put pattern with double perforations lengthwise of goods." Yes, I'm sure I got that all right. *(Reads.)* "Join upper and under-arm by putting single notches together and at the elbow ease in the fulness, ease in the fulness—between X and double notches ——" I wonder what that means? *(Examines sleeves.)* The double notches are there but I don't see where there's going to be no fulness. Ain't these things puzzling anyhow? I ain't used this pattern for so long, I declare, I've lost all sense of it. *(Reads.)* "Allowance for extra length may be made at the bottom." My land! I forgot to add anything on to the bottom of them sleeves. I allowed on the width, but when I went back to make them notches, I forgot to add anything onto the length, and Johnny's arm growing just like a corn-stalk! *(Snatches tape-measure from back of chair and rushes to door. Calls.)* Johnny! Come in here a minute, Johnny! Now, where's that boy gone? He's always off when I want him. I'll never get this suit done in this world. I'll have to wait now till he comes in to get his measurements, though I don't know what I can do about it if they are too short. I ain't got cloth enough

for new ones. I suppose I can keep busy with these facings. (*Sits with lap-board.*) Now, where the dickens did I put them scissors? (*Finds them on floor and begins to cut rapidly.*) This is positively the last suit I am going to make for that boy. It's getting to a point where there ain't no economy in it, but I wouldn't mind so much if I wasn't so pushed for time. Whatever became of that pin-cushion? It was here just a minute ago. (*Knock heard.*) Now, ain't that the luck? Who can be coming at this time of day? Well, whoever 'tis won't get a bite to eat, that's sure. I'm just going to get a lunch for Silas. I ain't got time to get supper for nobody to-night, I tell you that. (*Rises, brushes off threads, and turns her apron.*) I should think that any one around here would know that Johnny is going to speak at the Sunday-school entertainment to-night, and might think I'd be busy rehearsing him. (*Knock heard again.*) Ain't this room a sight? (*Goes to door.*) Is that you, Mrs. Spencer? Come right in. I declare, I'm tickled to see you. I never thought about it being you. Ain't this most your supper time?

Enter MRS. ALBERT SPENCER.

MRS. S. Yes, it is, and I've just been up to the store for some bread. I thought I'd just step in on my way back to see if you were going to the entertainment this evening. Bert will have to be away and I'd like to go with you. I'm a little timid about going alone. I'm not quite used to the country yet.

MRS. L. Oh, yes, indeed, I'm going. Why, Johnny's going to speak, you know. Set down, Mrs. Spencer. (*Mrs. S. looks around for an empty chair. Mrs. L. sits by table again, but soon rises.*) Well, I declare, there ain't no place to set, is there? (*Removes sewing material from chair and dusts chair with her apron.*) I just let everything go to-day because I've got to get Johnny's suit done for him to wear to-night. If you don't mind I'll keep right on sewing. I guess I've got to get it done. Ain't it an awful job to make boys' clothes?

MRS. S. I don't know; I never made any.

MRS. L. Wasn't no boys in your family, maybe. Well, they're an awful care. Always getting their clothes tore unexpected. I wasn't intending to make this suit up for Johnny till fall, but he come home cross-lots from Joe Wigg's birthday party yesterday and got all mixed up in some barbed wire. Tore his clothes all to pieces, so I've been working just like a mill all day to get him ready for to-night.

MRS. S. I've sometimes made simple dresses, but I never would attempt anything tailored.

MRS. L. Tailored? What's a tailor to do with it? If you make it yourself, how can it be tailored?

MRS. S. Why, stitched and pressed and stiffened and all that, you know. That's hard to do.

MRS. L. It ain't no work to stitch if you've got a machine. And if the seams draw anywhere a warm flat-iron helps a lot, but as for stiffness, well, Johnny won't stand for anything stiff. He takes it from his father. Now, Silas has got a stiff collar laid away somewhere, one he had when we was married. It's a-getting awful yellor and I have to take it out and wash it once in a while, so to have it ready if he should want it for a funeral or something, but he won't wear it on no festive occasion. (JOHNNY LARKIN *is heard whistling off stage.*) Johnny, you come right in here now, I want to try these sleeves.

JOHNNY (*off stage*). No, I don't want to.

MRS. L. You come right in here; I've been waiting for you. How do you think I'm going to get this suit done unless you're here when I need you? (JOHNNY *enters, sees Mrs. S., and hangs back.*) Oh, come right in; never mind Mrs. Spencer; she's seen boys before if she ain't sewed for 'em.

(JOHNNY *holds arm awkwardly while Mrs. L. tries the sleeve.*)

MRS. S. How do you do, John? I hear you are going to speak to-night.

JOHNNY. Yes'm.

MRS. S. Going to speak all alone?

JOHNNY. Yes'm.

MRS. S. Well, isn't that fine? I'll surely be there.

JOHNNY. Yes'm.

MRS. L. That sleeve is going to be too short, just as I feared. It will be if he grows the least mite. Ain't that a shame?

MRS. S. Can't you put a cuff on it if it proves to be too short?

MRS. L. Well, now, I never thought of that; I suppose I could. (JOHNNY *tries to sneak away.*) You hang right around here, Johnny; I'm liable to want you any minute. Go show Mrs. Spencer the picture you got for speaking last year. (JOHNNY *exits.*) His teacher says he done better than any one in his class. All them that got a picture last time is entitled to

speak to-night. They're going to have a real nice prize this year. I think Johnny ought to get it easy; he's got a fine piece I found for him. I ain't never heard it read before. (JOHNNY enters with picture which he shows to MRS. S.) Now, ain't that a lovely picture?

MRS. S. Why—er—yes—it is—very bright and cheerful. That would brighten up most any dark corner, wouldn't it? (JOHNNY steps on MRS. S.'s bread which she had placed by her chair.) Oh, John, my bread!

MRS. L. Careful, Johnny, don't be so clumsy. Keep your feet off Mrs. Spencer's bread. If it is store bread it won't stand everything. (*Hunts among her pieces.*) Say, Mrs. Spencer, you don't see anything of a piece of cloth that looks like a collar, do you? I'm sure I cut one.

MRS. S. Why, no, but maybe I'm sitting on it. (*Rises, helps MRS. L. hunt for collar. JOHNNY takes the opportunity to leave the room.*) Is this it, Mrs. Larkin?

MRS. L. I guess it must be, but it don't look just as I remember it. I ain't used this pattern for most two years, and I've allowed on so much the pieces don't look natural.

MRS. S. Most two years? Why, John must have changed a lot in that time. I should think you would need a new one by now.

MRS. L. (*sewing*). These patterns don't help much, anyhow. Here it says three-eighth inch seam allowed. Pooh! What's a three-eighth seam on a growing boy? Now, when Johnny was little I had a pattern that I made myself, and I had real good luck with it, too. But one time my cousin come up from Boston visiting and she said it wasn't like what the boys down there were wearing, so when she went home she sent up one of these 'ere city patterns. Every year for a spell she sent up a new one, but this was the last one she sent.

MRS. S. She probably thinks you are buying John's clothes ready-made now.

MRS. L. Well, I would be if I had my way and I was just a-saying this was the last suit I was going to put scissors to. I wanted to take Johnny down to Nashuay last fall and get him a suit as is one, but his father had just taken him down to the circus three months before and we couldn't afford no more trips. I had this cloth on hand and Silas said we'd have to economize. Our old horse died, you know; of course he wa'n't real young, but there was more good in him. Then we had to have the barn shingled and Silas had to have his new

false teeth all about the same time, as you might say. How this basting-thread does knot up!

MRS. S. Can't I help you a little, you have so much work here? I can't stay long, but I could work while I stay.

MRS. L. Well, no, I don't know as there is much you can do. The pants is all run up, and I guess I've got the jacket down to one pair of hands now. You might read me them directions for fastening on that collar. (*Gives pattern to Mrs. S. and holds up sewing.*) Say, them sleeves don't look in right, do they? (*Rises.*)

MRS. S. Are you sure you went by the notches?

MRS. L. You couldn't make a mistake there. All there is to these tishy patterns is notches and perforations.

MRS. S. Perhaps you cut them both for the same arm. Do you suppose you did?

MRS. L. You don't think I'd make a blunder like that, after all the clothes I've made, do you? Where's that boy? I'll see how they look on him. (*Walks to door. Calls.*) Johnny!

JOHNNY (*off stage*). I can't try on anything, ma,—I'm—I'm—I'm washing up.

MRS. L. You're washing up? Well, I'm glad you've got that foresight; I declare, it's unusual. You be sure you wash behind your ears. And take that brush that's back of the sink and scrub your hands. And, Johnny, when you get that done, I want you to go up-stairs into the spare-room where there won't nobody hear you, and go all through your piece from beginning to end. Don't forget your bow, and put in all them gestures I showed you how. (*Returns to Mrs. S.*) I'll leave these sleeves now till I try on the whole thing.

MRS. S. (*looking at pattern*). Mrs. Larkin, in the pattern the coat has two box-plaits.

MRS. L. Yes, I know, but I let it go right into the fulness this time. Johnny has grown more than two plaits since this pattern fitted him. Why, you ain't no idee how they grow. (*Sits.*) Well, now, what does it say about that collar?

MRS. S. (*reading*). "Put center seams together, and at——"

MRS. L. Hold on a minute, let me get my bearings. Put center seams together? Why, I ain't got but one. How is anybody going to have two seams, both in the center? Ain't that sensible? I declare, any one would have to study algebray to make anything out of these patterns.

MRS. S. It means to put the center of the collar to the center of the coat.

MRS. L. Why, I should think any one would know that without being told. These patterns may be all right for city folks who don't have nothing to do but sit around and have things explained to them, but I guess if they lived in the country where folks has to hustle, they'd get some sense into them. You needn't read any more. My head is all beat out now trying to get down to such foolishness. I'll use my judgment.

MRS. S. You seem to be getting along all right, so I'll hurry home and —

MRS. L. Don't hurry on my account, but I suppose you want to get your supper. (*Rises.*) I declare, I've been so het up over this sewing, I ain't had time to ask you who you saw up to the store, but we can talk that over on the way up and after the speaking. The strain will be over then.

MRS. S. What time do you start, Mrs. Larkin?

MRS. L. You better get here about seven. I shall want to get a front seat, you know. (*MRS. S. exits.*) How she has hendered, just as if I didn't have enough to do as it was. (*Steps heard off stage.*) Is that you, Silas?

JOHNNY (*entering*). No, ma, it's me, but I can't try on anything. I was just going up-stairs.

MRS. L. Well, you'll have to wait now. I want you to go tell your father that he'll have to get his own supper the best he can. I've got all I can tend to right here. He knows I'm driven. There's a pitcher of milk just as you go into the pantry. If he finds it's turned a little, he can take some of that that's in the pan on the middle shelf. Tell him to skim it first, because I've got to churn to-morrow. Now, hurry. (*JOHNNY exits. MRS. L. calls after him.*) The bread, you know, is right in the jar. Tell him to take that that's on top, that's the oldest. (*Returns to sewing.*) Poor Bert Spencer has got to eat store bread. Well, we ain't never been driven to that yet. Mrs. Spencer thinks that because she was a stenographer down to Nashuay, and married Bert Spencer, who went off for a spell to get some higher education, that it ain't proper to make anything to home, even bread. I guess she thinks home-made clothes is a little beneath her, but I guess she'll find Johnny will look just as well as the best of them. Humph, I can remember when Bert Spencer wore clothes so home-made looking I wouldn't put 'em on to any child. (*Rises*

and goes toward door. Calls.) Johnny! (*JOHNNY enters.*) Now, Johnny, I want you to take this suit and try it on just as fast as you can while I'm threading up the machine and picking up the pieces. I can't waste any more time.

JOHNNY. But, ma, I'm awful hungry.

MRS. L. There'll be plenty of time for you to eat whilst I'm a-stitching up the seams, but it has got to be fitted first, so it will pay you to hurry.

JOHNNY. But, ma, I ain't went over my piece yet.

MRS. L. Don't you hender me a minute. You do just as I say, and be quick about it. Let me see, which is which? Yes, them's the pants. Now, hurry. (*JOHNNY exits with suit. MR. L. picks up pieces.*) What did I do with Johnny's book? Oh, here it is. I do hope I'll find time to hear him go over it at least once before we go. I ain't no way sure that he's remembered it. (*Hunts in basket for thread.*) I don't know now as I've got any thread that will match this. (*Sighs and sits down with basket.*) I know one thing, Abigail Larkin ain't going to cut any such day's work as this again.

JOHNNY (*entering with new suit on ; advancing awkwardly*). Say, ma, I can't wear these, they're too big.

(*MRS. L. rises to inspect her work. The pants are large and ill-fitting. The coat hangs unevenly and the sleeves are too short and twist at the arm-hole.*)

MRS. L. I declare, they don't look noway as I thought they would. Back up here. (*Pulls coat down and JOHNNY raises shoulder. MRS. L. pulls it down on other side and JOHNNY raises other shoulder. Repeat.*) Stop humping up your shoulders that way. I didn't cut this coat to fit no camel.

JOHNNY. Well, it don't feel good, ma.

MRS. L. Well, I can't help that; it's the looks I'm after. (*JOHNNY stretches out arms.*) Don't stretch out your arms that way, you'll be busting them bastes.

JOHNNY. I ain't never going to wear this suit, so there!

MRS. L. What's that, you ain't going to wear it? Well, I guess you be. What you think I've been working like a slave for? You don't think I bought this cloth to throw away, do you? I paid thirty-nine cents a yard for it, too, so to have it every thread wool. (*Knock heard.*) Who can that be coming now? (*Drops into chair.*) I declare, Johnny, I'm clean discouraged.

Enter MRS. S., hurriedly.

MRS. S. Oh, Mrs. Larkin, I'm afraid I've kept you waiting. It was later than I thought when I got home, but I've hurried my supper and it is only seven-fifteen now. I'm sorry to be late.

MRS. L. (*gasping*). Seven-fifteen! Johnny! (*She is alarmed at the lateness of the hour, but wishes to conceal the fact from MRS. S. She pushes JOHNNY behind her and as she talks tries always to stand between MRS. S. and JOHNNY.*) Well,—I'm—I'm a little bit late with my supper myself,—and—and I've got a little bit more to do,—that is—I'm not quite ready, you know, so you better go right along and not wait for me.

(Tries to urge MRS. S. toward door.)

MRS. S. But I'm in no hurry. Why can't I wait? Johnny is all ready, isn't he?

JOHNNY. No'm, it ain't —

MRS. L. Hush!

JOHNNY. I ain't eat —

MRS. L. Hush! (*To MRS. S.*) Oh, yes, yes, he's almost ready, but I've got a little pressing to do here and there, you know, yes, and a little picking up, so you go right along. I wouldn't keep you for a minute, no. I'll get there as quick as I can. There ain't a mite of need of your being late. (*MRS. S., urged on by MRS. L., has reached the door. MRS. S. exits, not quite understanding the situation. MRS. L. calls after her.*) There ain't a mite of anything to be afraid of between here and there. That funny noise you always hear up at the corner is just the water running in the gutter, I calculate. And if Wilson's dog comes out and barks at you, don't be scart. It sounds savage, but he don't mean nothing by it. (*Returns to JOHNNY.*) Johnny! Seven-fifteen!

JOHNNY. Ma, why didn't you let her wait?

MRS. L. Wait? Do you suppose I want her to know that you'll have to speak a piece in a suit that ain't half finished? She'll spread it all around that it is home-made as it is. Why, I had no idee it was so late. Ain't we in a pickle? Well, we'll have to make the best of it, that's all. You come right here and let me pin up that hem. There's no time for stitching, that's sure. What's got that pin-cushion?

(Hunts for cushion.)

JOHNNY (*whining*). But, ma, I ain't got to wear these, have I, ma? Ma, have I?

MRS. L. (*pinning up hem of jacket*). What else have you got? If you'd kept away from that barb-wire fence like you ought to have done after all I've cautioned you about it, you might have worn your old ones, but there ain't no boy of mine going to speak a piece in no public place in overalls or clothes that's tore. (JOHNNY *stands on one foot*.) Stand up, Johnny; I can't pin this no way decent with you lopping.

JOHNNY. These pins will show, won't they, ma?

MRS. L. No, the light is awful dim there and I'm pinning them blind. The basting threads sink right into this cloth real good. Right here in this strong light they don't show scarcely any. I tell you, Johnny, you're lucky to have a mother who has got some sense and foresight. It ain't every boy as has a mother that can see a way out of a tight place like this. I suppose you would have called Mrs. Spencer right in and told her your clothes was only basted. You pretty near leaked it out as it was. There, that's the best we can do. Now, you run and fetch your necktie, and just bring along my bonnet and shawl from the hall. (JOHNNY *exits*. MRS. L. *removes her apron, brushes her dress, and smooths her hair*.) This ain't the dress I was calculating to wear, but I guess there won't anybody notice me much, the attention will all be on them that's speaking. (JOHNNY *enters with shawl, bonnet, cap and necktie. Throws things into a chair and brings necktie to his mother*. MRS. L. *ties it for him*.) Are you sure you've got your lines all right, Johnny?

JOHNNY. Yes'm, I guess I'll get the prize all right.

MRS. L. Well, I ain't no way sure about that. I want you to speak up nice and loud so as every one can hear you. Just as like as not Deacon Rice will be chosen judge, and you know he is awful deaf. And don't stand like a stick, neither; make it just as real as you can. We may be late, but I'll try to find a way to get up front some way, so to prompt you if you should happen to forget.

JOHNNY. But, ma, I'm awful hungry.

MRS. L. (*tying on bonnet*). There's no time to eat now, but if you speak the best of any one, perhaps I'll give you a cent to buy a cornball, if they have any to sell. (*Puts on shawl while JOHNNY begins to look for his pockets*.) Now, Johnny, I don't want you to try to put your hand in any pocket whatever. Just remember they ain't been sewed in yet. And

I want you to keep by yourself just as much as possible and when you move around don't put a mite of strain on them seams. Get your book, now ; we've got to hurry.

(Exits. JOHNNY snatches book from table, puts on his cap and follows her.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Platform of Meeting-house Hall, North Crowfield.*
The stage is free of furniture of any kind. Entrance at back.

(*Just before curtain rises, MISS MIRANDA BROWN, a person of dignity, enters main hall carrying a small, showy, gaudily framed picture and takes her seat front of the audience. She may be dressed in any manner in keeping with rural surroundings. As she talks she should give the impression of having learned what she believes to be a suitable speech, but in her confusion words do not follow just as she planned them. When curtain rises she steps before the stage and faces audience.*)

MISS B. Ladies and gentlemen, on this ostensible occasion, it gives me great pleasure, as president of the Choral and Oratorical Society of North Crowfield,—that is to say,—that I'm glad you have taken this ostensible occasion—to take a seat, that is, to be present at the contest on this ostensible occasion. In this rare and wonderful community,—I mean, of course, the youth in this community is rare,—that is to say,—the rare ability in the youth of this community is rare—and should be improved and enjoyed. If we should travel the length of the earth, that is to say, if we should start from —— (*name local town on north*), on the north end, and travel to our finish at —— (*name local town on south*), on the south end, we would not pass through any city or town where the rare oratorical ability is so rare,—as in the youth of—this rare community. In order that the rare ability be preserved,—that is, kept,—the society has picked,—or selected,—this beautiful prize (*showing picture*), which will be rewarded to the most beautiful speaker, or singer; that is to say, the beautiful prize will be rewarded to the speaker or most beautiful singer who—who makes the most beautiful effort. That is, you understand, this beautiful prize is to go to—to—to the one who gets it. As president of the society, it gives me great pleasure to pick,—that is to say, choose, Deacon Rice for a judge (*pointing with her fan to*

DEACON RICE, *who should be sitting somewhere in the hall*), and for a second judge, Miss Patience Smiley (*pointing to some woman in audience who happens to be sitting near DEACON*), and Oliver Wiggly will also judge. (*Points to some boy in audience.*) After the contest is completed, or finished, that is to say, after it is all over and done with, the three judges will be pleased to meet, that is to say, we will be pleased if the three judges will meet, at any time and place the three judges please to meet, and will administer this beautiful prize according to the law of judgment. (MRS. L. *now comes hurriedly down the main aisle of the hall, bringing a chair with her. She takes her seat front of audience, L.*) The first to contest will be Miss Arethusa Pettingell. (ARETHUSA PETTINGELL *enters stage, back, when her name is called. The selection may be optional. MISS B. sits during the recitation, but after ARETHUSA exits, she rises to announce the next speaker.*) Miss Matilda B. Green will now entertain us. (MATILDA B. GREEN *enters in the same way. If desired, MATILDA may sing rather than recite. She exits after her performance. MISS B. rises again.*) The last will be a declamation by Master John Larkin.

(*At this, MRS. L. opens her book and shows some signs of nervousness.*)

(NOTE.—JOHNNY'S *suit is not made upon the stage. The sleeves upon which MRS. L. works in Act I are extra ones, and she merely appears to sew the sleeves into the coat. The left sleeve should be securely fastened to the coat about one-third the length of the arm-hole at the back. It should be basted the rest of the way. Between Acts I and II, this basting thread is removed, but the rip is not noticed until left arm is extended in its first gesture. During Act I, the back, center seam of coat should be basted with a close stitch. Between the acts this thread should be removed and seam basted with a long, loose stitch so it may be ripped easily. The rip in the side-seam is imaginary.*)

(JOHNNY *enters stage, back, and walks toward center, feeling for his pockets awkwardly, but looking straight ahead. As he nears the front, he sees his mother and drops his arms and holds arms and fingers very stiffly by his side.*)

JOHNNY (*reciting*).

It was a black, an awful night,—

(Remembers he has not bowed. Bows, and gives title.)

THE SHIP AT SEA

(Speaks first two verses in a loud, slow, monotonous voice, without changing position.)

It was a black, an awful night,
And as dark as it could be.
No star gave out a ray of light,
For a storm hung o'er the sea.

The great sea yawned with awful thirst
For a boat just sailing by,
The thunder rolled and the lightning burst,
And the waves went dashing high.

MRS. L. *(low voice)*. Scst ! Put in your gestures.

(JOHNNY repeats second verse, putting in gestures.)

JOHNNY. The great sea yawned with an awful thirst,

(Makes an arc with right arm at the word "yawned.")

For a boat just sailing by,

(With up and down motion of right arm indicates a boat sailing.)

The thunder rolled —

(Sweeps right arm vigorously in circular motion to indicate rolling of thunder.)

—and the lightning burst,

(Says "burst" explosively, and at same time thrusts out left arm, exposing the large rip in arm-hole of sleeve.)

And the waves went dashing high.

(Raises both arms to indicate high waves.)

Then the captain said to his sailors brave,
"We are doomed this night to die,
This vessel now no man can save
From the rocks that yonder lie."

(Points with forefinger to left of stage to indicate "rocks yonder" and again exposes the rip. MRS. L. discovers it and during next verse attempts to call his attention to it.)

Just as he spoke the little craft,——

MRS. L. Scst! Johnny!

(JOHNNY fails to hear and does not look her way.)

JOHNNY. A sailing this fatal course,——

MRS. L. Scst! Johnny!

(JOHNNY pauses a moment, glances at his mother and continues.)

JOHNNY. Was hit by the breakers fore and aft,

(Swings left arm forward to indicate "fore" and backward for "aft.")

With wild and awful force.

MRS. L. Your sleeve, Johnny! Put your hand over it.

(JOHNNY pauses, bewildered, and looks at his mother. MRS. L. points to rip. JOHNNY sees it and clutches it together with his left hand.)

JOHNNY. Then in a trice the vessel dashed
Right onto the rocks below,

(Starts to point to rocks at left with left hand, remembers the rip and starts to point with right hand. He finds this inconvenient, so clutches rip with right hand and finally points with left hand to indicate "rocks below.")

Like a little chip the keel was smashed,

(Claps hands together to indicate "smashing.")

By the force of the awful blow.

The deck was swept and the sails were rent,——

(Remembers to clutch rip again with his left hand, but forgets his lines and looks blankly over heads of audience, not at his mother.)

—was swept—and the sails were rent —

(Short pause.)

—and the sails—were rent —

(Little longer pause.)

And the—*(recovering)* and the sailors lost their
hold

On the slippery rail—and down they went
Right into the sea so cold.

*(Forgets rip, puts hands together like a diver and bends
knees at the same time to show how ship went down.)*

Only the captain and his mate
Were left on the sinking ship,
And each one knew that soon or late
The boat from the rock would slip.

*(Dips and slides one foot forward to indicate slipping of the
ship.)*

The brave mate tried to do his part, *(Hesitates.)*
The brave mate tried to do—his part,
He came from a sturdy race,
But when he thought of his dear sweetheart
The tears streamed down his face.

*(JOHNNY sniffs, and feels for his right coat pocket, then for
his right pants pocket. Sniffs again.)*

—thought of his dear sweetheart
The tears streamed down his face.

(Feels with his left hand for his left coat pocket.)

The tears streamed down his face. *(Sniffs again.)*

MRS. L. Go on, go on !

*(JOHNNY clutches rip again, and in his efforts to keep edges
together he is quite as apt to separate them.)*

JOHNNY. But the captain said, "Cheer up, my lad,
The most we can do is die,
And the sea for toll has often had
Better men than you and I."

And all the time the thunder rolled,

(Makes another large circle with right arm to indicate rolling of thunder.)

And the lightning flashed again,

(Makes a very quick up and down motion with right arm to indicate flash of lightning. Left hand still holds rip in left sleeve.)

The breakers came a thousandfold
And drenched these luckless men.

MRS. L. Johnny!

(JOHNNY is interested only in his lines.)

JOHNNY. And the vessel tossed in its rocky bed,

(Leans first to one side then the other to indicate rocking of boat.)

All covered with ocean spray,

MRS. L. *(with anxiety)*. Johnny!

(JOHNNY merely glances at his mother.)

JOHNNY. "Stand back,—— *(Steps one step back stiffly.)*
——stand back," ——

(Steps forward to position again.)

——the captain said,
"The mast has been torn away."

MRS. L. The side seam, Johnny!

(JOHNNY pauses, bewildered, and glances to see that he is still holding the rip. Looks at his mother defiantly.)

JOHNNY. "The mast has been torn away."

MRS. L. The side seam, Johnny, it's a-ripping! *(JOHNNY then clutches his right side seam at the hips with his right hand and still holding the sleeve with his left he forgets his lines completely. His mother prompts him.)* "This is our chance ——"

JOHNNY. "This is our chance, my boy," said he,
When the mast came crashing down,

(Takes both hands away to show the crashing of the mast.)

"If we cling to the mast we're safe, you see,
And we will not have to drown."

They seized it ——

(Tries to show how they seized it, but his coat gets in the way and he clutches one of the pins in the hem.)

Ough! *(Begins to search for the pin that scratched him.)*

MRS. L. *(eagerly)*. Hush! *(Prompting.)* "They seized it ——"

JOHNNY. They seized it just as a mighty wave
Swept it far into the sea,
And the captain said ——

(Hesitates and looks at his mother.)

——said——"My lad, be brave,
For that is a star I see."

(Takes left hand from sleeve and points very quickly to star over his head, then holds sleeve again.)

The heavens brightened star by star,

(As both hands are occupied, he looks up and tries to point to two stars by motion of his head.)

The waves soon ceased their strife,
While clinging——*(hesitating)* while clinging to the
broken spar,
The two men fought for life.

And they went floating on —— *(Hesitates.)*

MRS. L. *(prompting)*. ——"and on ——"

JOHNNY. And on —— *(Looks at mother again.)*

MRS. L. *(prompting)*. ——"and on ——"

JOHNNY. And on ——

MRS. L. Well, say it, "On and on."

JOHNNY. On and on ——

MRS. L. *(prompting)*. "And they went floating on and on,"

JOHNNY. And they went floating on and on,
Through all that awful night,
They were still floating when the dawn
Broke with the morning light.

“A sail, a sail,” the captain said,

(Points with right hand over heads of audience to indicate the approach of the sail.)

“Hold on, my lad, hold on,”

(This reminds JOHNNY of his seams and he clutches the rips with great vigor.)

“A boat is coming straight ahead,
Our fears will soon be gone.”

But the mate was cold—*(hesitating)* his lips,—
(pausing) his lips — *(Longer pause.)*

MRS. L. *(prompting)*. “Were dumb.”

JOHNNY. Were dumb,
And he could only gasp,
His hands from holding on were numb—*(re-*
peating) numb

(Without taking hands from coat, he straightens fingers to show numbness of hands.)

And he almost lost his grasp.

He thought his sweetheart called him,
And his arms began to s-l-l-ip,—

(Becomes absorbed in the story and slowly lowers arms.)

But they seized him and they hauled him
Onto the rescue ship.

(Clutches both sides of his coat and draws it forward to show manner of rescue. This causes the basting-thread in the back to give way and the coat rips its entire length. He does not notice this, but MRS. L. does and she hastily removes her shawl.)

They wrapped him in a blanket then,
And warmed him very fast,

(Pulls coat around him to indicate man being wrapped in blanket and discovers to his horror that his coat has ripped. He gives his mother an agonized glance. MRS. L. immediately steps upon the stage from main hall. She steps quickly behind JOHNNY and places her shawl over him. JOHNNY is greatly bewildered by her action.)

MRS. L. Go on and finish. *(She coolly finds her place in the book and prompts.)* "And the captain ——"

(JOHNNY meekly finishes.)

JOHNNY. And the captain promptly thanked the men
That the boy was safe at last. *(Bows slightly.)*

MRS. L. *(facing audience).* Gentlemen and ladies, I hope you will please excuse Johnny; I shall have to take him home early. He's been suffering from a cold and he ain't feeling just right.

(She tries to hurry JOHNNY toward exit, but JOHNNY holds back.)

JOHNNY. But, ma, ain't you going to wait for the prize?

MRS. L. Hush! *(She pushes him toward exit. Just before they exit she speaks in lowered voice.)* It ain't my fault if you lost the prize; I told you not to strain them seams.

(Both exeunt. Off stage JOHNNY is heard bawling.)

DEACON *(rising).* All them that's been competing this evening has done their pootiest, and the effect has been most raymarkable, but the judges argy that the prize should go to John Larkin for the masterly way he handled a difficult subject while suffering from a cold. The opinion is onanomous.

Miss B. *(stepping in front of stage with picture).* Will Master John Larkin please advance and receive this beautiful picture?

(JOHNNY enters with shawl on. He takes a few steps forward, looks back to see if his mother is following. As he does not see her he casts off the shawl and steps forward for the prize. MRS. L. peeks in to see if everything is going right and discovers to her horror that the shawl is upon the floor. She enters, picks up the shawl and comes

up behind JOHNNY hastily. She reaches him just as he receives the prize. JOHNNY looks up and sees the shawl about to descend again upon his manly shoulders. With a quick motion he turns and circles out toward the exit, and as he tucks the picture under his arm the rip in the back of the coat is plainly visible. He exits hastily, closely followed by MRS. L. and the shawl.)

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